E

1948

E 4250

14 APR 1948

Registry Number E4606/1260/31

FROM

A. Creech Jones
Colonial Secretary
to Mr. Bevin

No.

Dated 9th April

Received in Registry 14th "

Future of British Subjects in Palestine.

Discusses question of the Future of the British subjects in Palestine, and proposes that they should be warned of the dangers of staying in the country.

Last Paper

4250

References

(Minutes.)

Mr Balfour

Mr Bevin
Apr. 15

DB 15/4

(Print)

I.P.P. Sly/Defence Command 12/4

Mr Balfour

JB Apr. 20

(How disposed of)

Opt. Mr Creech Jones
from Colony S.
April 14
7) Minister of Defence
April 15

I.P.P. C.O. Cd 1493 17/4

JB Apr. 21

(Action completed)

(Index)

14/4/48

Next Paper

E 4669

34967

S/S agree with PM

32

COLONIAL OFFICE,
CHURCH HOUSE,
GREAT SMITH STREET, S.W.1.

14 APR 1948

9th April, 1948.

My dear Ernest,

On 31st March the Defence Committee agreed that all British subjects in Palestine should be warned of the dangers of staying in the country and that, while they could not be forced to leave, they should be strongly advised to do so as quickly as possible and told that if they remained it would be at their own risk. I undertook to enquire whether warnings on these lines had already been issued and, if not, to ensure that they were.

The position on 31st March was that members of the commercial community in Palestine had already been advised that, in making their plans for the future, they should remember that H.M.G. could help in their departure to a much greater extent now than later on, when the possibility of practical assistance would steadily diminish. They were advised further that they should send their wives and children to the United Kingdom before the end of April. Missionaries and members of allied institutions were similarly advised through the Bishop in Jerusalem. The oil companies were also advised that they should arrange for families of their employees in Palestine to leave the country.

I therefore telegraphed to the High Commissioner instructing him to issue a warning as desired by the Defence Committee, but suggesting that there might be some members of the British community, e.g. employees of the refineries in Haifa, in whose case advice to leave the country would be inappropriate, at any rate at this stage, and that he must exercise his discretion regarding the issue of a warning to these people. The High Commissioner has replied (a) he assumes that the warning should be given only to those British subjects whose normal domicile is in the U.K.; (b) if an explicit warning is conveyed to these persons, whether verbally or otherwise, it will not be possible to exclude those who may be in positions of imperial interest, such as the

/staff

The Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P.

staff of the Haifa Oil Refineries. He has suggested that in the case of all such essential persons the warning should be accompanied by an intimation that H.M.G., while in no way minimizing the attendant risk, would be glad if they would remain at their posts until the last possible moment in the national interest. It would have to be made clear that in the event of their remaining in response to this request H.M.G. would accept responsibility for the evacuation of the individuals concerned at a later date, should circumstances in Palestine make this necessary, and in the meantime accept responsibility for their security.

As to (a) above, I think that the warning should apply only to those whose normal domicile is not in Palestine. As to (b), in view of the importance of maintaining the operation of the oil refineries as long as possible, I feel that the warning must be modified in the sense suggested by the High Commissioner

Before submitting for the approval of the Prime Minister, I would like to know if you agree with me on these two points. I am writing similarly to Alexander.

Yours

Anthony C. Jones

9th April, 1948.

75872/159/27/48 Pal.

On 31st March the Defence Committee agreed that all British subjects in Palestine should be warned of the dangers of staying in the country and that, while they could not be forced to leave, they should be strongly advised to do so as quickly as possible and told that if they remained it would be at their own risk. I undertook to enquire whether warnings on these lines had already been issued and, if not, to ensure that they were.

The position on 31st March was that members of the commercial community in Palestine had already been advised that, in making their plans for the future they should remember that H.M.G. could help in their departure to a much greater extent now than later on, when the possibility of practical assistance would steadily diminish. They were advised further that they should send their wives and children to the United Kingdom before the end of April. Missionaries and members of allied institutions were similarly advised through the Bishop in Jerusalem. The oil companies were also advised that they should arrange for families of their employees in Palestine to leave the country.

I therefore telegraphed to the High Commissioner instructing him to issue a warning as desired by the Defence Committee, suggesting that there might be some members of the British community, e.g. employees of the refineries in Haifa, in whose case advice to leave the country would be inappropriate, at any rate at this stage, and that he must exercise his discretion regarding the issue of a warning to these people. The High Commissioner has replied (a) he assumes that the warning should be given only to those British subjects whose normal domicile is in the U.K.; (b) if an explicit warning is conveyed to these persons, whether verbally or otherwise, it will not be possible to exclude those who may be in positions of imperial interest, such as the

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The Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P.

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As to (a) above, I think that the warning should apply only to those whose normal domicile is not in Palestine. As to (b), in view of the importance of maintaining the operation of the oil refineries as long as possible, I feel that the warning must be modified in the sense suggested by the High Commissioner

Before submitting for the approval of the Prime Minister, I would like to know if you agree with me on these two points. I am writing similarly to Alexander.

(Sgd.) A. Creech Jones.

Registry No.

~~Top Secret.~~
~~Secret.~~
Confidential.
~~Restricted.~~
~~Open.~~

J. G. S. B.

Draft.

The Colonial Secretary.

(From the Secretary of State).

Private Sec.
(Co. informed of S/S's decision by telephone)
O. S. Davis
Apr. 13

Copy to:

M. of Defence

14/4.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

(2/47) (14728) Wt. 11489—144 250m 5/47 G.S.St.

IMMEDIATE OUT FILE 14 April, 1948.

14/1
14/3
34

Dear Arthur,

Thank you for your letter of April 9th making proposals as to the manner in which a warning should be conveyed to British subjects in Palestine of the dangers of staying in the country.

2. I agree with the line of action ~~proposed in your letter~~ the permutation at para. 7 and am sending a copy of this letter to the Minister ~~Alexander~~ of Defence.

B/4.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) Ernest Bevin.

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FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

14th April, 1948.

(E 4606/1260/31)

Confidential

Immediate

Dear Arthur,

Thank you for your letter of 9th April making proposals as to the manner in which a warning should be conveyed to British subjects in Palestine of the dangers of staying in the country.

2. I agree with the line of action proposed in the penultimate paragraph of your letter and am sending a copy of this letter to the Minister of Defence.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) Ernest Bevin.

The Right Honourable
A. Creech Jones, M.P.

Great George Street,
London, S.W.1.

12th April, 1948.

Dear Arthur,

In your letter of 9th April you asked my comments on your proposed instructions to the High Commissioner in regard to the warning to British subjects in Palestine as to the dangers of their staying in the country.

As regards your first point, I agree that the warning should apply to those whose normal domicile is not in Palestine.

On the question of modification of the warning in respect of those who may be in positions of Imperial interest, such as the staff of the Haifa oil refineries, there is no doubt that apart from the good grounds there are for keeping important installations like these going after 15th May and even after 1st August, there will also be required the continued services of a number of ex-officers of the Palestine administration to run essential services between 15th May and 1st August. There would be every advantage in all wives and children of men who may stay behind for this purpose being evacuated as early as possible. But as regards the scope of the warning for people in this category, it would surely be well for the High Commissioner

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The Right Honourable A. Creech Jones, M.P.

to consult, on the one hand the heads of the commercial installations concerned (e.g. the Haifa oil companies), and on the other hand the G.O.C. Palestine as to the minimum assistance he may desire for running essential services up till 1st August: you will remember that paragraph 4 of his Administrative Instruction (D.O.(48) 26 - Annex II) gives him powers to employ temporarily officers of the former Palestine Government so far as these may be essential to assist in the evacuation.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Foreign Secretary.

Yours sincerely,

(Minister of Defence)

C-

PW 38

OUTWARD TELEGRAM

75872/159/27/43

Cypher (O.T.P.)

4606/1260/21

21 APR 1948

TO PALESTINE (Gen. Sir A. Cunningham)

FROM S. OF S., COLONIES.

Sent 17th April, 1948. 21.15 hrs.

IMMEDIATE

No. 1493 Secret.

Your telegram No. 865. Future of British nationals. I have consulted my colleagues who agree that the warning to British subjects to leave Palestine should be modified in the sense you suggest in the case of essential personnel in positions of Imperial interest. It may be made clear to those persons that His Majesty's Government accept responsibility for their evacuation at a later date, should circumstances in Palestine make this necessary, and in the meantime accept responsibility for their security as far as available resources permit.

2. The warning should be confined to those British subjects whose normal domicile is not in Palestine. Dominions nationals, if any, should therefore be included.

Copies sent to:-

Foreign Office - Mr. Beith.
War Office - Col. M.M. Charteris.
Private Secretary, Foreign Office.
Private Secretary, No. 10 Downing Street.
Private Secretary, Ministry of Defence.
Private Secretary, Commonwealth Relations Office.